



Dr. Demetress L. Davis

2139 Silas Deane Highway

Suite 206A

Rocky Hill, CT 06067

Tel. 860.529.1000

Fax. 860.900.0049

**admin@wellspringsendo.
com**

February 21, 2022

Dear Senators Kushner, Cicarella, Osten, Hartley, and Miner, Representatives Abercrombie, Betts, Walker, Dathan, Nolan, and France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

Good Day! It is with the utmost urgency that you be presented with our serious concern for Husky patients. These patients are not only overwhelmed with pain but frustrated and angry as there seems to be no one who cares enough about their urgent needs or their pain as there are very few endodontic providers to care for their teeth. 2 out of 3 adults on HUSKY do not access dental care, many because they cannot find a dentist/endodontist. The reason, as you are aware, is because there have been no financial provisions made to encourage more general/endodontic providers to provide the required care for them. In addition to the above statements, COVID-19 and the current economy has brought about new issues for Medicaid patients and dental providers of Medicaid patients, and it is essential that our grievances be addressed:

- a. According to public health dentists, 8 out of 10 adults on HUSKY who need a root canal end up getting an extraction because they cannot find a specialist to treat them. Wellsprings Endodontics, PC is the ONLY practice in the state of Connecticut that has the heart and compassion to provide endodontic therapy for patients who are insured by CTDSS (Medicaid)/Husky. It is our mission and diligence to provide the necessary endodontic care for adult Medicaid patients as dental care for these patients continue to be lacking in our communities. We gladly work hard to provide vital care for Medicaid patients. Importantly, observe that Medicaid patients have the most need and are often the people that are treated unfairly and do not receive the appropriate dental care required for optimum health, especially in the areas of specialty dental services such as endodontics.
- b. According to the website, www.ctdssmap.com, "The Department of Social Services (DSS) provides medical assistance to low-income persons and people who could otherwise support themselves if not for the fact that they have excessive health care costs." This statement of assurance implores the question, "How can dental providers continue providing quality care for Medicaid communities, when current financial provisions are unjust, lacking the suitable support needed to provide proper care and assistance for Medicaid patients?" Certainly, a reasonable increase in dental Medicaid fees for adults would serve these purposes.
- c. Specifically, the underserved communities lack proper endodontic care because a remarkable justification via proper financial provisions has yet to be attained. *It is imperative that the Medicaid fees for all dental care for all Adult Medicaid patients receive a modest increase.* The current fees have become unrealistic for today's costs of providing proper care. The dental Medicaid rates have not been increased in 14 years. The adult dental Medicaid rates are so low, dentists receive 37 cents on the dollar compared to average insurance. The dental providers' overall cost of doing business includes but is not by any means limited to necessary dental supplies, equipment purchases, and maintenance, utilities, rent/mortgage. In the provision of treatment of Medicaid patients, the current fees are not proper or just compensation for the intensely desired and required moral, ethical, and legal requirements of giving proper dental care.

Considering the above truths (a.), (b.) and (c.), a dental fee increase is long overdue for Adult Medicaid patients as it was decreased over 10 years ago. Consider the above facts as we discuss our reasons for resubmission of the request for the Connecticut Department of Social Services to promptly increase the overall dental fees for Adult Husky Medicaid patients. *The reasons for this request are as follows:*

1. Connecticut's Governor, Ned Lamont, signed in action, House Bill 6689, the budget bill. Connecticut Dental Health Partnership (CTDHP) is provided one-third of the state's budget for the fiscal year of 2022-2023, **and** according to portal.ct.gov, 'analysts ended the 2021 fiscal year with a surplus that leaves the rainy-day fund at its largest amount in history'. This bill includes provisions for healthcare, which was approved by the Connecticut General Assembly with overwhelming bipartisan support who make significant investments. Governor Lamont specifically noted that the 2022 and 2023 biennial budget:
 - a. Expands access to quality, affordable healthcare to working families by covering out-of-pocket and premium costs for approximately 40,000 individuals through Access Health CT. *This innovative approach to expanding Medicaid will maximize federal support, minimize taxpayer costs, and allow the state to help tens of thousands of families that otherwise struggle to afford doctor visits and medicine*', this includes dental care. Therefore, increased Medicaid rates for all services can lead to an expanded network and reduce geographic barriers to care for the adults of Connecticut. According to Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, " *This is a budget full of wins for families across Connecticut,*" as access to comprehensive adult services has the potential to reduce financial burden for patients and emergency rooms having to see patients experiencing dental-related pain.
 - b. Allows support for health and human service providers through an additional \$50 million in support from the FY 2021 surplus, plus an additional \$30 million in FY 2022 and FY 2023 that will be matched by another \$30 million in federal funds.
- 2) Lack of dental care, (e.g., endodontics) encourages a cascade of events of unnecessary health disparities such as dental pain, infection, GI problems, diabetes, malnutrition and even death, just to name a few. Endodontic care is a crucial key in the prevention of these disparities among others, not to mention, it prevents unnecessary loss of teeth. After all, provision of dental assistance by the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CTDSS) is its reason for creating the Connecticut Dental Health Partnership, to encourage and motivate more dental practitioners to begin caring for adults who are underserved in our communities and assist CTDSS in their mission of providing for those patients who 'are the elderly, people with disabilities, families and individuals who need assistance in maintaining or achieving their full potential for self-direction, self-reliance and independent living,' as stated on the CTDHP website, www.ctdhp.com. No patient can achieve the aimed goals of CTDHP if they lack confidence in their smiles or have preventable medical issues due to lack of proper mastication and digestion due to unnecessary loss of teeth.
- 3) During these times of COVID- 19, an infection that is air-borne, highly contagious, rampant and chaotic, people are in fear of their lives and the lives of their children. As a result of this pandemic, economic inflation is causative in addition to the already tangible increases in all expenses for the maintenance of all dental businesses and are effective across the board for everyone. To give an example of the effects of COVID-19 and inflation on the medical/dental profession, there has been a significant surge in personal protective equipment (PPE) costs that has impacted providers' ability to see Medicaid patients. The cost of PPE is up to \$16 per patient per visit, which is just the beginning as dental providers have encountered a substantial increase in the cost of the necessary dental materials and supplies needed to provide essential care for Husky patients.
- 4) Inquisitively, when are dental providers going to receive the necessary increase in dental fees to properly provide care for your patients? While Wellsprings Endodontics, PC and general dental practitioners

continue to provide dental care for Medicaid patients *in assistance with CTDHP and CTDSS*, a pertinent increase in adult Medicaid dental fees is not only obtainable, but the time has arrived where it is also more than readily available as it is practical. Without excuse or overlooking the severity of this issue, increases in financial provisions for the capability of meeting the demands of imperative need of patients and dental practitioners via adult Medicaid dental fee increases should be instantaneously forthwith.

We are grateful that you have taken the time to consider and answer our questions and requests regarding the Adult Medicaid dental fee schedule. We do appreciate all that will be provided on behalf of those patients who do not otherwise have an option to receive private dental health care benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Demetress L Davis', enclosed within a large, loopy oval shape.

Demetress L Davis, DDS, MDSc
Wellsprings Endodontics, PC

